EMORY UNIVERSITY

Sociology 443s

SOCIOLOGY OF MUSIC

Spring 2017
Tuesday / Thursday
2:30-3:45
773 Woodruff Library

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd
231 Tarbutton Hall
tdowd@emory.edu
Office Hrs: 1-3:00 (M)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The sociology of music has a long history. Its initial development benefited from the work of
scholars who played central roles in the sociological discipline, including Max Weber and
Theodor Adorno. Its subsequent maturation was aided by emergent schools of thoughts whose
respective proponents accumulated systematic analyses of musical life, such as the art-worlds
approach of Howard Becker and the production-of-culture approach associated with Richard
Peterson. Its recent boom has been fueled by sophisticated use of theories and methods and by
thoughtful debate regarding fundamental concepts.

We delve into this important literature and grapple with the social and cultural foundations of
music. We do so in three broad sections, considering (1) the production of music (2) the content
of music, and (3) the reception and uses of music. Along the way, we address a number of
important questions, which include the following: How did we come to have the current system
of music, with its particular notes and forms of composition? Why does much music sound so
similar? What types of environments foster innovative music and musical diversity? Why are
some types of music (e.g., the works of Beethoven) deemed as “high culture” while other types
(e.g., rhythm and blues) are classified as “popular culture?” How do issues of race, gender, and
class shape the production and consumption of music? How do people use music in their
everyday lives?

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This advanced course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of much class
discussion, a fair amount of reading, three examinations and a written assignment. The Emory
University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your
assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult:

http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html
A) Attendance

You are expected to attend class, especially because we use class time to discuss, among other things, the readings, theoretical traditions and related research. Regular attendance, moreover, will raise your final grade. If you do not miss any classes, I will add two points to your final grade; if you miss only one class, I will add one point to your final grade.

B) Class Participation and Discussion

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will improve the quality of class discussion. Of course, class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. Class participation comprises 25% of your final grade.

C) Examinations

You will take three, non-cumulative examinations – one following each major section (e.g., The Production of Music). These in-class exams consist of short-answer and essay questions. Prior to each exam, I will distribute a handout that will help you prepare for the test. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade. The first exam will occur on February 9, the second exam will occur on March 21, and the last exam will be on the date scheduled by the registrar – May 3.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, overheads) will be posted on the Blackboard site for SOC 443s (see http://classes.emory.edu/).

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available on the class Blackboard site (click on the “Reserve Readings” button) and at Woodruff electronic reserves (see https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php).

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit the Emory Office of Accessibility Services website; see http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html).

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to Revision)

January 10: Introductions


**SECTION ONE: THE PRODUCTION OF MUSIC**

**January 12: Becoming a Musician – Conventions and Proficiency**


**January 17: Be(com)ing a Professional Musician – Connections and Limitations**


**January 19: Working in the Music Business – Careers and Challenges**


**January 24: Music Organizations – Creativity and Commerce**


**January 26: Music Fields – Dynamics of Conformity and Change**


**January 31: Music Fields in Transition – The Intersection of Technology & Law**


**February 2 & 7: Film Presentation (All Things Must Pass: The Rise and Fall of Tower Records)**

**Exam Preparation Sheet Distributed (February 7th)**

**February 9:** FIRST EXAMINATION

**SECTION TWO: THE CONTENT OF MUSIC**

**February 14: Musical Instruments – Rationalization and Standardization**


**February 16: Music Genres – Emergence and Evolution**


**February 21: Consecration of Music – Classical Music**


**February 23:**  
**Consecration of Music – Popular Music**  

**February 28:**  
**Change and Conformity in Musical Fields – Classical Music**  

**March 2:**  
**Change and Conformity in Musical Fields – Beyond Classical Music**  

**March 7 & 9:** SPRING BREAK (No Class)

**March 14 & 16:**  
**Film Presentation** (20 Feet from Stardom)  
**Exam Preparation Sheet Distributed (March 16th)**

**March 21:**  
**SECOND EXAMINATION**
SECTION THREE: THE RECEPTION & CONSUMPTION OF MUSIC

March 23: Active Listeners – Incorporating Music into Daily Life


March 28: Active Listeners and Music Technology


March 30: Music Fans and Scenes


April 4: Music and Mobilization


April 6: Music and Community


April 11:  **Music and Cultural Omnivores/Univores**


April 13:  **Music, Fans and Geography**


April 18 & 20:  **Film Presentation** (*Searching for Sugarman*)

*Exam Preparation Sheet Distributed (April 20th)*

May 3:  **THIRD EXAMINATION (3:00 – 5:30 pm)**